



It's All About Families

WIC Family Centered Education (FCE)

November 2002 Newsletter

And The Survey Says.... *Preliminary Evaluation Results*

A Big Thank You to all of you!

Together, you sent in completed evaluation forms for 200 group education sessions and 1450 participant surveys. This data helped us find out more about how FCE worked for you. We'll send you the report when it is done!

We're making some small changes to the lesson plans. Final lesson plans will be sent to FCE pilot agencies and soon will be available on WIC's web site.

California FCE at FNS

California WIC has been invited to share our FCE pilot at the FNS-USDA Nutrition Connections conference in Washington DC February 24-26, 2003.

We plan on having the audience participate in a group education session and dialogue with us about the results of the pilot. Gauri Rao from PHF, Suparb Chiaravanont from Watts Health Foundation, and Jennifer Gerson from ARC will be sharing their experiences in the workshop. If you are going, drop by and help us answer questions and share with other states.

We will keep you posted on future funding opportunities.

WIC and Head Start

Missouri WIC was given a USDA infrastructure grant to coordinate nutrition education services between WIC and Head Start.

Goal: Their goal was to increase fruit and vegetable intake and physical activity of WIC families.

How Did It Work? Final results are now being tabulated, but here are some highlights:

- Established Memorandum of Understanding at state level with Head Start
- Selected 6 local WIC agencies as grantees
- Administered Food Frequency Questionnaires and Physical Activity survey forms –pre and post; control and grantees
- Selected 5 lesson plans for parents on promoting fruits and vegetables and physical activity; 3 lesson plans for children
- Trained Head Start and WIC Staff on lesson plans
- Children educated at Head Start; parents at either WIC or Head Start
- Some grantees gave age appropriate books promoting health messages to families
- Distributed parent newsletter
- Participated in literacy councils
- Encouraged referrals between two programs

Lessons Learned So Far by Missouri:

- Would have been helpful to measure attitude and knowledge as well as behavior
- Get input on lesson plans before distributing
- Needed to visit local agencies more to help with teaching of lesson plans
- Cross training very effective

Please contact us any time!

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Food for Thought: *Including Others...*

*"Children are born when they're ready.
They creep when they are ready.
They teethe when they are ready.
They walk when they are ready.
They talk when they are ready.
But they go to school, ready or not, when they're five."
Jim Grant, Educator*

WIC is building partnerships for school readiness. On January 8, 2002 President Bush signed the "No Child Left Behind Act" into law. This law changes the federal government's role in education. One of the key components of this law is early childhood reading instruction. To support the presidential agenda, Food and Nutrition Services and USDA have implemented the WIC "Healthy Children Ready to Read" Partnership to focus on developing strategies to promote early childhood reading through WIC agencies. Members of this partnership include public and private entities such as the Department of Education (Early Reading First), the Department of Health and Human Services (Head Start), the National WIC Association, as well as national reading organizations such as Reading is Fundamental, First Book and Reach Out and Read.

School Readiness involves parents. A central philosophy of school readiness is supporting the role of the parent as the primary teacher and advocate for children.

Parent involvement in education is not new. Head Start brought parent involvement into the spotlight in 1965, and since then thousands of parent involvement programs have been implemented. Examples include Early Head Start, Zero to Three, and Parents as Teachers.

Research on successful parent involvement programs shows us that effective parent involvement programs are built on the following assumptions (Henderson, 1987):

- The primary educational environment comes from the family.
- Parent involvement in a child's education is a major factor in improving school effectiveness, the quality of education, and a child's academic success.
- The benefits of parent involvement are not confined to preschool or elementary school, but extend on up through high school.
- Low-income and minority children have the most to gain when schools involve parents.

Schools are focusing on improving parental involvement. The "No Child Left Behind Act" also expands options for parents who want to see their children go to a good school and receive a quality education. Parent Involvement is now defined in the law as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities ..."

